

The CALL OF THE FORTY THOUSAND



SOME OF THEM

WOMAN'S FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Publication Office
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

THE CALL OF THE FORTY THOUSAND

THE students at Isabella Thoburn College combine practice with theory, as the work of the Social Service Department clearly shows.

Groups of students go out into the city and hold Sunday Schools wherever the children can be gathered together.

Sometimes there are regular meeting places where the children come and wait impatiently for the teachers to arrive. Such places are at wells, a camel stage or in an empty building. Others gather at the bend of a lane and passersby, who would never go out of their way to attend a service, will stop and listen.

In these groups of children, about every other child has a baby sister or brother on his or her hip, so the order is not very good but when the singing begins they nearly all listen or join in. After their attention is secured, the roll is called and names of new ones recorded.

"What is your name?" is asked of a dainty maiden of about eight.

"Titali" (butterfly) is her answer, and you think her mother showed good judgment, for she is as sweet and pretty as a butterfly, though her gay little garments only half cover her. You notice that she is not very much bigger than the baby sister that she carries on her hip.

"Isn't your burden too heavy for you?" you ask.

"She isn't heavy, she is my sister," is the simple answer.

"And what is your name?" you ask of the next child.

"Piyari" (a girl's name), answers a little boy.

"But that is a girl's name," you remind him.

"Oh," says his mother, who has just drawn a vessel of water from the well and stops to rest by the little group, "I named him that so the gods would not be jealous of me for having a little son and take him away. They wouldn't care so much for a little girl and when they hear me call him Piyari they think he is a girl and do not trouble me."

"And your name?"

"Chichak" (smallpox) is the ready answer. You are horrified, but the boy explains that before his birth his mother had lost three children through smallpox. To appease the god and perhaps also to deceive it, this name was given and so far it had proved a safeguard.

The next little girl has only a pet name, Munia (little darling), and she is a little chatterbox. She takes occasion of your speaking to her to tell you that her mother is a *pardah* woman (lives in seclusion always) and can never come out and asks if you won't come to see her. She herself, though only about eight, will soon be shut away for the rest of her life in

pardah and she wants you to come to her house every Sunday.

You ask for little Brij Rani (princess) who is there every Sunday and you hear that she has died during the week of plague. It is hard to go on with the lesson after that but when Sunday School is over you go to see if you can comfort the mother. She drives you away with a curse, saying it was because you cast an evil eye upon her child that she died and you go away sad-hearted hoping that some day you may be able to teach the poor ignorant mother some of the things the child had learned. As you leave the little hut, a voice calls to you. "Miss Sahib," says a young Mohammedan woman, "Brij Rani was daughter-in-law to that woman. The child's life was very unhappy at home but she used to long for Sunday mornings that she might go to your school and hear the things you teach. I think the mother-in-law was beginning to learn those things from the child but she is afraid to let you know it. She used to listen to Brij Rani sing your songs and if you will come again some day when her son is not at home and none of the men folk are around, she will let you talk to her I am sure."

So you can at least be glad that Brij Rani was a little missionary before she died.

Would any King's Herald girl wear a dress to Sunday School, the very first time you had ever been to Sunday School, too,

that your brother made for you? Surely not, especially if your brother had never sewed a dress before. But little Sita had no clothes to wear and her brother wanted very much to take her to Sunday School but he didn't think she ought to go with no clothes, even though they lived in India. So somehow he got a few coppers and bought a very scant piece of cloth and it was such a queer dress he made of it! But the little sister got to Sunday School and before long she had learned more than all the boys, and oh, how proud the brother was of her!

There are more than forty thousand children like these we have told you about in the city of Lucknow. With the present equipment of the College for this sort of work, only about five hundred can be reached every Sunday. This number could be greatly increased if more students could be trained for the work and large numbers could also be gathered for a little week-day school in the afternoons, if there were only some one to look after them.

Isn't it fine that the King's Herald boys and girls who have such splendid schools, both on Sundays and week days, are going to raise this year as their Thank Offering, a fund of \$3,000 to extend this work among the street children of Lucknow?

A WORD TO LEADERS

Do not read this leaflet to the children. Read it yourself, get into the spirit of the opportunity, and then tell the story to the children. They will respond with a desire to do something.

Give out the "Thank you" cards, explain clearly how they are to be used and make each child feel that if a card is taken it must be returned, and returned filled if possible.

You as leader are the impelling force to make this Thank Offering a success. The children will do their part gladly.

Additional material will be given in the March, 1919, *Junior Missionary Friend*.